IX. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In order to determine the significance of the information generated from this project, we need to view the findings from the historical perspective that has been generated from previous research pertaining to New Bern and Tryon's Palace. For the purpose of this investigation, the complexity of this site, which has been continuously occupied since the early eighteenth century, will be examined from three temporally defined perspectives. The first addresses the period of time between 1710, when the Palatine settlement of New Bern was established, and 1770, when the construction of Tryon Palace was completed. The second time period focuses exclusively on the occupation of the site from construction in 1770 until it's destruction in 1798. And the third and final historical view of the site will be tied to activity and occupation that began after the destruction of the palace in 1798 and culminated at the time of its reconstruction in the 1950s.

Little is known about the site before 1766, when Governor Tryon decided that it would be the location of his palace. The earliest historic record of the area tells us of John Lawson's cabin in the early 1700s, presumably before 1710 when New Bern was settled by the Swiss Palatines, although perhaps concurrently. Lawson's cabin was reported as being "about a half a mile from an Indian town at the fork of the Neuse River." It was situated on high ground by a creek, that is generally acknowledged as being present-day Lawson's Creek (Jerry Cashion, personal communication 1996). Given the restrictions of this information, it is very possible that John Lawson's cabin was located in the vicinity of Tryon Palace near Lawson's Creek and the Trent River (see Figure 1).

Maps of New Bern for the years between 1710 and 1733 indicate that the Palatine town settlement was concentrated on the point of land at the confluence of the Trent and Neuse rivers, approximately one-half a mile east of Lawson's Creek (see Figures 9 & 10). By 1764 the population of New Bern had increased from "20 families" to "hundreds of houses and 500 residents." Although records from this time are difficult to trace, it seems very likely that after five decades of occupation the town extended its boundaries in order to accommodate the increase in population. For New Bern, the only direction available for expansion was to the west. Exactly how far the town spread outward is difficult to estimate; yet it is conceivable that the most desirable locations would have been on the waterfront. The site of Tryon's Palace, on high ground overlooking the Trent River and in very close proximity to Lawson's Creek, is certainly agreeable for settlement, just as John Lawson may have decided in the early 1700s and as Governor Tryon clearly decided in 1767.

Documentation for Tryon's claim to the land provides very little information about the previous ownership or land use, with one exception. In 1768, a petition for Richard Dobbs Speight was filed for "adequate compensation" against the appropriation of Lots 27, 28, a 21-foot section of Lot 29, and Lots 101 and 194 (see Figure 11). Only Speight's Lot 194 falls within the project boundaries, and, at present, there is no information that indicates this property had been improved prior to 1766. In addition to Lot 194, three of the twelve lots Tryon claimed fronted Eden Street and one was located at the corner of South Front and Eden Street (see Figure 11). In 1776, a year later, Tryon also claimed 30 feet of the 60-foot wide Eden Street and incorporated it into the palace grounds.

The second time period in the analysis of the Tryon Palace site begins in 1766, when the land for building the palace was acquired, and ends in 1798, when the palace burned. The palace, as designed by John Hawks, was the "typical Georgian manor house of mid-eighteenth century England" (Sandbeck 1988:108). Surviving records of Hawks' work is found in two 1769 plans of New Bern that were drawn by Claude Joseph Sauthier (see Figures 12 & 13) and a descriptive memorandum dated July 12, 1783, that was written by John Hawks to Francisco de Miranda and includes a sketch of the palace and gardens (see Figure 14). The sketch is attributed to Sauthier, and although the date is unknown, it is assumed to have been drawn between 1767 and 1771 (Nancy Richards, personal communication 1996). Since only the perimeter and gardens of the palace fall within the limits of this street improvement project, it is of particular interest that each of the three representations presents a different garden plan. The two 1769

town plans show garden squares on each side of the land entrance to the governor's palace, while the ca. 1767-1771 sketch places the garden squares between the river and the palace. The differences between the three are mutually exclusive, where one plan has a garden the another has lawn. Obviously all three cannot be accurate, unless each plan represents a different phase or stage in the development of the gardens. A fascination with knowing which of the three plans was "reality" has been stimulating imaginations for many years. Before the palace was reconstructed there was speculation that the plan Hawks sent to Miranda was the "authentic diagram of exactly how the gardens were laid out" (Dill 1940:49). Ironically, when the sketch was found it only contributed to the confusion.

In yet another attempt to resolve the question of authenticity, several historical maps of the study area were selected for comparison (Appendix E). The 1798 plan of the palace that shows the town lots, streets and the east and west wings of the palace was used as a base map; and the three Sauthier maps were photographed to equivalent scale, using the east and west wings as register marks. Interpretation of features associated with the second time frame, 1766 to 1798, was aided by the manipulation of these four maps.

A comparison of Sauthier's work with the results from this project, as well as the previous archaeological work at Tryon Palace, has failed to provide clear, consistent evidence that would support the veracity of one record over another. For example, the location of Feature 8, the sand walkway in the Pollock Street Trench, was found to correlate with the May 1769 plan. On the other hand, excavations conducted by the James River Institute in 1995 found a sand walkway that was indicated on ca. 1767-71 sketch, referred to as the "Miranda map." However, photos taken during the James River excavations point out their similarities (Appendix F).

These similarities are consistent with construction attributes identified during the excavation of garden walkways in Virginia, described as follows: "planting beds that were divided by a central pathway and two internal crosspaths. After the planting beds were prepared with rich, fertile loams, the paths were cut. In some instances, a thin layer of planting bed loam settled into the bottom of freshly cut paths before they were packed with sand, creating a thin dark band of soil sealed by a layer of hard-packed sand" (Kelso et al. 1994:15). Archaeological excavations at Bacon's Castle found, among many garden-related features, a "white sand path." Underlying the sand was a collection of broken wine bottles that date from the late 1600s. The bottles, in conjunction with "artificially raised" planting areas and walkways, were thought to have been intentionally placed "for drainage purposes" (Kelso et al. 1994:34). This description corresponds with the attributes of Feature 8 located along Pollock Street during this archaeological project and with the sand walkway recorded on the palace grounds in 1995.

Further support for the interpretation of Feature 8 as a garden path is indicated in the soil test report (Appendix G). Soil recovered from Feature 8, zone E, was found to have above normal readings for phosphorus and manganese that attests to a high organic content. These levels are comparable to those found in compost and leaf mold deposition (J. Kent Messick, personal communication 1997).

The final time frame defined in order to assist with the understanding of the site begins in 1798 when the General Assembly sub-divided the palace square (see Figure 15) and ends when the palace was reconstructed in the 1950s. The 1798 plan shows lot numbers that are still in use. Earlier maps only show property boundaries and lot designations, e.g., the ca. 1824 Price-Fitch *A Plan of the Town of New Bern* and the ca. 1779 Benbury-Jones *Plan of the Town of New Bern*. The earliest map of New Bern that shows property lines and structures is Gray's *New Map of New Berne* dated 1882. Property lines of seven lots (601-607) created in 1798 extend between the newly established George Street and Eden Street; and three (608-610) face the Trent River. Additional information about property lines and structures on this land appears on Sanborn Insurance maps between 1908 and 1931 (see Figures 16-20).

The Tryon Palace site, as it exists today, was recreated in the 1950s. With the exception of the ca. 1826-1833 Dixon-Stevenson House at 609 Pollock Street and the west wing of the palace, all standing structures located on the former eighteenth-century palace grounds were either demolished or moved. The Dixon-Stevenson House is located on Lot 611 designated in 1798 by the General Assembly (see Figure 15).

Seven years before the Dixon-Stevenson House was built, a "negro house" had been located on Lot 611 (Sandbeck 1988:203). The ca. 1813 John P. Daves House at 613 Pollock Street was relocated within the palace grounds.

With the chronology and selected historical background pertinent to the study area established, the second part of contextualizing the archaeological findings from this project was to make associations with the previous archaeological work at Tryon Palace. The earliest work was conducted by Morley Williams to complement historical research during the reconstruction of the palace in the 1950s. Little is known of this work, and more than twenty years passed before the archaeological resources were looked at again. In the late 1970s two archaeological investigations were conducted on the palace grounds. Both documented stratified deposits including two feet of nineteenth-century fill that was thought to be possibly associated with the destruction of the palace (Watts 1977; Funk 1978).

In 1988, test excavations around the perimeter of the Dixon-Stevenson House found evidence of "the 18th century hurricane" (Clauser 1988). Storm-deposited sand was also documented in the Pollock Street and Cross Pollock Street trenches; however, it overlays a hard-packed dark gray sandy loam rather than subsoil. Even though the Dixon-Stevenson House lies within 20 feet of the Pollock Street trench, the difference can be accounted for by the fact that the trenches exposed streets, not a house yard, and that the storm sand was deposited on an eighteenth-century road surface. This interpretation is supported by the parallel linear depressions (Feature 9) into the hard-packed zone (see Figures 53 & 54). The width of the depressions was measured at two inches. The distance between the depressions, as they appeared in the trench profiles across Pollock Street, was about five feet. These measurements suggest that carriage wheels may have made the parallel linear depressions. Furthermore, the characterization of the hard-packed surface that retained these recessed impressions should be understood in terms of the contrast with the overlying storm sand. The difference between the two zones suggests that the hard-packed surface was the result of long-term use that ended after storm-deposited sand buried it.

In addition, two distinct incidents of storm-deposited sand were recorded in the trench across Pollock Street (see Figures 63 & 64). During the late eighteenth century, two hurricanes were documented in New Bern. One was in September 1769, during the construction of Tryon Palace, and the other was on August 1, 1795 (Barnes 1995:36; Dill 1955:259). Cultural material recovered from the lower, or earliest, storm sand included creamware and delftware. By 1760, delftware was being replaced by creamware, so the presence of both suggests that they were deposited during a period of time when this change in ceramic popularity was occurring. The hurricane of 1769 falls within this time frame. The only diagnostic material recovered from zone 3, the upper storm sand, was pearlware. Recognizing the limitations of using one diagnostic ceramic, its presence does indicate a time range between the late 1770s, when pearlware was developed by Josiah Wedgwood, and the 1820s, when it became less popular (Noël Hume 1970:130). The hurricane of 1795 falls within this date range.

Storm-deposited sand was also observed in the trench profiles on Eden Street and George Street. At 530 feet north of datum point 1, a three-inch layer of light gray sand mottled with white sand (zone 4) was documented at 1½ feet below surface (see Table 5). Pearlware and a light-colored creamware recovered from this zone were used to determine that more than likely the sand had been deposited during the 1795 hurricane. Again, in the east profile of the George Street trench (see Figure 70) a 2½-3 inch layer of storm-deposited sand was recorded at approximately 1½ feet below surface.

Another instance of relating a known event to archaeological findings can be demonstrated by another inspection of the stratigraphy in the Eden Street trench. The known event, in this case, is the burning of Tryon's palace in 1798. The archaeological indication of this event first appears 275 feet north of datum point 1 and was documented for at least an additional 100 feet. The evidence is the presence of a one-inch layer of charcoal at about one foot below surface that only appeared in the west, or street-side, profile (see Tables 1 & 2). Underlying the charcoal layer was about 10 inches of very dark grayish brown sandy loam. Although cultural material was not recovered below the charcoal lens between 275 and 375 feet north of datum point 1, a dark zone, that ranged in color from dark grayish brown to very dark gray,

appeared consistently at 1-2 feet below surface along the length of the trench profile. Material recovered from this zone, at 530 feet north of datum point 1, was found to date from 1750 to 1770 (see Table 5). Zone 7 in Shovel Test 6 is also considered to be comparable (see Figure 33 and Table 13). Diagnostic ceramic material recovered from this dark sandy soil consisted of lead-glazed slipware and decorated delftware temporally fixing the deposition in the middle to late eighteenth century.

What is the significance of finding archaeological evidence, like the New Bern hurricane sand and the burning of Tryon's Palace that corroborates historical knowledge? Material recovered from these deposits, as well as the distinctive soil indicators, can be used as a reference marker. Our understanding about the principles involved with stratigraphic deposition dictates an interpretation that archaeological deposits found below the storm zones must have been laid down during an earlier period of time. The prime value of this information is that, for one reason or another, clearly diagnostic material is not always recoverable from a stratigraphic zone or feature. This dilemma either restricts interpretation or leaves it open to wide generalizations. An example of this situation that was encountered during this project will demonstrate the value of seemingly redundant information. Photographs were quickly taken of Feature 7 (see Figures 49 & 50) as the backhoe worked in an area that had been heavily disturbed by utility lines. Due primarily to inaccessibility, no further documentation of the feature was conducted. However, because of the stratigraphic record in both the Pollock Street trench and in the trench across Pollock Street, it appears that the brick floor in Feature 7 was built below grade and set on subsoil. It also appears that about eight courses of brick foundation pier or wall (see Figure 49) give some indication of the depth below ground surface. Given the approximate depth of the trench at that location, at that time, and using an estimated brick width of 2¼ inches, the brick floor is probably about 2-3 feet below the ground surface, which would place it just below the earliest storm-deposited sand (zone 5) documented in the trench across Pollock Street (see Figure 64).

Earlier recognition of storm sand was noted in 1995 during the removal of underground storage tanks at the intersection of Eden and Pollock streets (Clauser 1995). One tank was located between the John Daves House and the staff parking lot. The tank was removed from a mechanically excavated pit, 4 feet deep and 5 feet wide. A brick foundation was exposed in the south profile approximately 2 feet below surface and 2 feet north of the parking lot curb. Clauser stated that this is the "same feature reported by Funk (1978) as features 3-7, and attributed it to a similar (late eighteenth to early nineteenth century) time period." The profile drawing of this underground storage tank pit shows a possible "planting bed" between 0.8 and 1.4 feet below surface. Under the possible "planting bed" was 0.2 foot of sand with brick inclusions that was interpreted as "a thin undisturbed construction layer, associated with the brick foundation."

Funk's (1978) features 3-7 were documented during archaeological monitoring for the installation of a fire security system. Evidence of "brick piers or foundations" was recorded at 1½-2 feet below surface. They are described as being "relatively porous" with "black cinders" and the mortar "appeared to be a shell and limestone mixture." The three brick features were determined to be "contemporaneous" and most likely "eighteenth-century structures that no longer were in use by the second quarter of the nineteenth century."

It seems plausible to extrapolate Clauser's 1995 perception by suggesting that Feature 7 referred to in the preceding paragraph and the brick foundation he recorded at 2 feet below surface, as well as Funk's 1978 features 3-7, are collectively related to the same structure.

Correlating the current archaeological findings with what is already "known" through historical records and previous archaeological work is only one way to understand the past. The limitations that the historical text forces on interpretation have been well recognized. The fact that expansive realms of information exist yet they are not known or can never be known, compounded by the abyss of misinformation or ambiguity will forever haunt the understanding of the past. A particularly enigmatic feature recorded during this project can underscore the depths of the unknown and perhaps never to be known. Feature 6 was recorded in the profile of the Eden Street trench (see Figures 43-45) and has

tentatively been associated with a garden bed that appears on the ca. 1770 Miranda map. However, other reasonably acceptable explanations that would account for the presence of a 6-foot deep trench were also considered and remain viable.

One of the likely explanations was that the trench might have been a ha-ha ditch with earth piled on each side and covered with wooden rails (Kelso 1992:45). Another possible interpretation can be found in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*. Alonzo Dill points out (1940:18) that the building of the palace forced the province into debt and fueled the growing unrest of the backcountry settlements. He claims that the palace "symbolized and dramatized the conflict between the east and west, and gave the backwoodsmen of Orange a tangible object upon which to vent their indignation." In defense of the threatening uprising of the Regulators, Tryon ordered that a "ditch be dug ... from the Neuse to Trent River ... [along] Muddy and part of Queen Street." According to Dill, "Tryon's redoubt was only a few hundred feet from the palace." Although all three explanations are acceptable for an eighteenth century governor's palace, similar to the three Sauthier maps, all three cannot be correct.

As a closing observation, the question of whether or not significant archaeological resources can be present underneath streets that are known to have been disturbed by previous utility construction was one that deserved serious consideration. The decision as to whether or not there is any probability that traces of historic or prehistoric occupation can be found is often based on an arbitrary assessment of how much ground disturbance has occurred. The obvious problem with this method of determination is that the amount of disturbance is unknown until it is exposed. The results of this project clearly demonstrate that despite what may be considered to be extensive ground disturbance, such as that seen on Pollock Street, there is strong evidence that even within the confines of a re-excavated utility trench archaeological integrity can exist. In fact, most visitors who stopped to look into the trenches commented on their amazement that evidence of the past could still seen undisturbed under two feet of road fill and paving. Their recognition that cultural features can endure under duress is message that urban archaeology has been struggling to deliver for years.